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Mackay, Alexander B.

THE
Gospel of the Rev. B. Fay Mills

TESTED BY SCRIPTURE,

By DR. A. B. MACKAY,

CRESCENT STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MONTREAL.

PREFACE.

Along with my late brother, Dr. W. P. Mackay, author of "Grace and Truth," I have always been deeply interested in evangelistic work, and have been able to work with evangelists from whom brother ministers stood aloof. It was, therefore, a very painful experience for me to discover that the Rev. B. Fay Mills was preaching what I considered false doctrine to the crowds who came to hear him. Though, before he came, I could not commit myself to his way of working, all that I had heard of him prejudiced me in his favour, and I went to his meetings hoping to get good for myself, and to do good as I had opportunity. I was driven away by his unscriptural teaching. I did not go hurriedly. I tried to explain away his words. I tried to put the blame on myself, for our hearts are very deceitful. I wondered if I had lost all relish for the old Gospel, when I found Mr. Mills' teachings so distasteful. I was reassured by a visit made to a meeting of the Salvation army, where, though the accompaniments were of a kind to me naturally objectionable, I was refreshed and strengthened by the Gospel preached by these women. Though I understand French imperfectly, I heard more saving Gospel truth in that meeting than in all the addresses I had heard from Mr. Mills.

It was a still more painful experience when I found his false teaching beginning to leaven my own people, and when I was compelled, therefore, to draw public attention to it. My object in doing so was not only to point out the error, but also to proclaim the truth. To those who think it would have been better to have left this matter alone, I commend the words of the Rev. Dr. E. H. Perowne, in his admirable notes on the epistle to the Galatians. Speaking on Gal. v. 9—"a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"—he says: "This verse, which occurs again (1 Cor. v. 6), seems to have passed into a proverb. There the apostle is condemning the toleration of a single act of open immorality in a member of the Church of Christ. It was the concession of a principle, and whether it be followed by similar acts or not, the standard of Christian morality will be lowered and a laxity of tone will gradually pervade the spirit and degrade the practice, of those who are called, 'not unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.' Here the warning is against the insidious nature of the false teachings of the Judaizing leaders. The difference between that teaching and 'the truth of the Gospel' may appear inconsiderable, and the teachers themselves may be insignificant in numbers or in authority. But error, once admitted, is a virus which will gradually spread and poison the whole system of doctrine, or the whole spiritual life of the individual or of the Church."

A. B. MACKAY.

Since writing the above I have received the following letter from the Rev. D. H. MacVicar, D.D., LL.D., Principal of the Presbyterian College, Montreal.

PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, Montreal, April 9th, 1894.

MY DEAR DR. MACKAY,—Having learned that you are about to publish the sermon you preached on the 25th of March last, allow me to express the hope that it may be as widely distributed and read as the views which it forcibly brings to the test of Scripture.

Your position regarding the silence of Mr. Mills upon essential elements of the Gospel, and the nature of certain dogmas directly propounded by him, finds endorsement in a timely article in the April issue of "The Presbyterian and Reformed Review," by the Rev. Dr. David R. Breed, of Chicago.

Yours very truly,

D. H. MACVICAR.

The Gospel of the Rev. B. Fay Mills Tested by Scripture,

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Gal. 2 : 13.—Even Barnabas was carried away.

It must have been a strong movement which swept Barnabas off his feet and carried him away ; and it must have also been a very plausible movement, for Barnabas was no weakling. He was a pillar of the Church—a most earnest and devoted Christian. Sometimes, when ministers of the Gospel begin to teach strange doctrine, people who sympathize with them say, "He can't be wrong, he is such a good man." That is a very dangerous way of thinking. It would be hard to introduce heresies into the Church, if the teachers of them were bad men. The devil is far too cunning to go to work in that way ; he generally uses those who have many excellent qualities to do this work. Sometimes the goodness of these men may be doubtful ; at other times it is real. There can be no doubt about the goodness of Barnabas. It is testified of him (Acts xi. 24), "He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." It was he whose splendid liberality is extolled by the Holy Ghost. He sold a field and laid the price at the Apostles' feet. It was he who was sent as a deputy from the Church of Jerusalem to examine into the revival at Antioch, and to report. Therefore, he must have been a judicious, trustworthy, solid man, who had the confidence of the Church. Yet, this very Barnabas, this good man, full of the Holy Ghost, full of faith, so liberal, so judicious, was carried away in a wrong direction by another spiritual movement in that same city of Antioch. Surely it must have been a very strong and a very plausible movement. It was evidently also very popular, and the leaders of it most influential. Peter, the first of the Apostles, gave it his countenance and support, and we may well believe that the leading ministers of the city fell into line, and it looked as if every Christian would be roped in, such was the pressure brought to bear on them.

Is it not likely that Paul must have been considered by many in Antioch a rash, conceited, meddlesome fellow ? Might

they not have said, "Who are you, to set yourself up against Peter, who received the keys of the kingdom? and against Barnabas, who first brought you here to do Christian work? You should be ashamed of yourself, creating this trouble in the Church, when we could all be so unanimous and friendly." So they may have thought and said, but Paul felt it his duty to resist Peter, and that not privately, but publicly, in the face of the whole Christian community.

Do you think that this was a pleasant thing for Paul to do? It must have been a very severe trial, especially to oppose Barnabas, for up to that time Barnabas had been his dearest friend. What a true, kind friend Barnabas had been to Paul—that friend in need who is a friend indeed! It was Barnabas who first held out the hand of cordial brotherhood to Paul, and he did so when all the rest of the Church looked with suspicion on him and gave him the cold shoulder. It was Barnabas who introduced him to public Christian work. Some young people, whenever they are converted, seem to think they are fit for any kind of Christian work. If they have the baptism of the Holy Ghost, what need have they for special training? Thus they think in their ignorance, and some older Christians who ought to know better, encourage them in their folly. Paul, the grandest Christian worker that ever lived, after his thorough training under Gamaliel, after his marvellous conversion, passed seven or eight years in obscurity—seemingly laid on the shelf,—but all the time preparing for the grandest work that has ever been done in this dispensation. When Barnabas came to Antioch and found such a revival there, by a divine inspiration, he felt that Paul was just the man for the work, and so he hastened to Tarsus, got Paul, and brought him to Antioch. And how they did work together in that city!—like very brothers. A monument of their successful labours we carry to this day, for it was there that we were first called Christians. Then the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them," and so they went forth together on that glorious first missionary journey from Antioch. Then afterwards they went as co-delegates to plead the cause of Christian liberty at the Council of Jerusalem.

Such was the previous connection between Paul and Barnabas; it must, therefore, have been a most painful trial for Paul to oppose Barnabas. Why did he oppose him? For the same reason that he opposed the false brethren at Jerusalem, that the

truth of the Gospel might be maintained. Christian brotherhood is sweet, Christian harmony is precious, but the truth of the Gospel is more precious and more sweet than anything else to the soul that truly knows and loves the Lord Jesus.

Now, in regard to this movement which Paul opposed, we are not to think that Peter and Barnabas had apostatized from Christianity and turned teachers of heresy. Theoretically they both believed with Paul, that salvation was by faith in Christ alone, but by their actions they denied this. They "did not walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel." Therefore, Paul said to them: "We being Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles, yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. ii. 15, 16), *i. e.*, we profess to be justified by faith in Christ alone, but by acting as you do, you say that something else is needed. This was Paul's controversy with Peter and Barnabas. It may seem a very small matter, but a little leaven will leaven the whole lump. (Gal. v. 6.) Once allow that a man has to do something in order to be saved, and the whole body of your teaching will become a mass of corruption. This is why Luther said that Justification by Faith is the article of a standing or falling Church. He is right. Keep to that and there is a possibility of spiritual health and spiritual progress. Fall from that and you fall from grace; you are on the down grade and go from bad to worse.

Now, if the reports of Fay Mills' addresses are correct, and I think they have been very ably reported—certainly those I heard him deliver have not only been carefully reported, but also carefully pruned; and if I rightly understand his words, as I think I do, then I say that the same error which Paul withstood in a very incipient form at Antioch has been proclaimed publicly among us by this evangelistic specialist.

In saying this I am not judging the man; I am merely speaking of his doctrine. And I am not speaking of all his doctrines. There are very many things in his teaching which I most heartily endorse, *e. g.*, his condemnation of worldliness among Christians. And I hope the Churches and Christians will lay his words to heart; for if when our Saviour came to Jerusalem he accused the Jews of making His Father's house a house of merchandise. He could say to some of our churches,

"Ye have made it a place of amusement." But, while the teaching of this evangelist is in many points true, the leaven of this false doctrine will as surely permeate all his other teachings, as a little cake of Fleischmann's yeast will raise all the dough into which it is put.

Therefore this is no light matter. It has to do with the most momentous question that an immortal soul can put, "What must I do to be saved?" You know Paul's answer, clear, short, definite, sufficient,—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Now, how does this evangelist deal with souls? Here are some specimens: “There was a man in Sacramento who once interrupted me in a meeting with the question, ‘How am I to be a Christian? If you can tell me, I’ll be one.’ ‘Wait till the close of the meeting,’ I replied, for I saw he had been drinking. I went to him and said, ‘You must first give up sin.’”

“In tones of confidence a method was given for getting rid of sins—Here it is—Give them up. Sin will never forsake you if you do not forsake it. Say good-bye to your sins.”

“God will never stop your sinning for you. Put yourself in humble submission to God. Say, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? This is the initial step of Christianity, and the question all the way along. Make an honest, faithful effort to forsake sin.”

“I met a young lady in the train. I asked if she was a Christian. ‘No,’ was her answer, ‘but if you can tell me something practical, I will be.’ I asked her what she ought to do, and she told me. Then I said, ‘Do that.’ I asked her what she should give up, and she said she would abandon what was sinful. But something was wanting. ‘Are you at perfect peace with the world?’ ‘No, sir,’ was the curt response, ‘don’t ask me to forgive that person.’ ‘I don’t, but God does.’ ‘Then I’ll never be forgiven.’ And I looked afterwards into her eyes, and I saw through them a vision of a soul in hell.”

“It is the only simple thing in the world; it is merely the surrender of one’s will to the righteous will of God.”

“No two men are converted in the same way, but the door through which all must enter alike, is that of self-surrender.”

“That a man can be as good as he wants to be. This is the essence of the gospel. What we pay a price for that we have.”

“There is something we must do ourselves. There is always the stone to be removed. There is always that hellish spirit of

pride. There is the spirit of envy. There is the spirit of unforgiveness. There is the unconsecrated tongue and pocket book. There is malice and uncharitableness."

"There is no limit to what God will do to him who has done everything for God."

"I have received piles of letters from people in Montreal," said Mr. Mills, "telling me that they have done this thing and that thing, and yet they have not perfect joy in the Lord. Perhaps they have not given up the last thing. Perhaps they have not the perfect willingness that God expects of us."

So he speaks, and let us consider some of the principles he enunciates, and see what Scripture teaches.

1. *Give up sin.* "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil."—Jer. xiii. 23. Tell a negro to make himself white and you speak as wisely as when you tell a sinner to give up sin. In searching, for a long time, the works of the late C. H. Spurgeon, to verify a reference to him which I make further on, I came upon the following passage, which is so appropriate that I cannot forbear quoting it. I felt that my bad memory was no accident when I fell in with these words of that glorious Pauline evangelist, which so answer to my own experience recorded further on. He is speaking on the passage, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean," and he says, "Now inasmuch as the text brings in God it is clear that this evil could not be cleansed without the divine interposition. There was no other way for the purging of the chosen ones but by the direct interposition of the Lord. Oh, but divines have fine notions now-a-days! It appears that children are not now born in sin as they used to be. They do not want any regeneration or conversion, for the stock is so superior that the branches naturally bear good fruit. I have never read of such people in the Scriptures, but I am often told that there are such now-a-days; at least their parents and their parsons say so. Of old it used to be 'That which is born of flesh is flesh,' and only 'that which is born of the spirit is spirit.' That of course is very old fashioned doctrine. Well, when we have a new fashioned God I daresay we shall have new fashioned truth; but at present truth seems to me to be as immutable as God Himself. As for myself, I know that I was born in sin, and I know that in me,

that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. I know, also, that I once tried to purge and cleanse my own heart, and laboured at it, I believe, as honestly as any person that lived. I went about to seek a righteousness of my own, and I endeavoured to get quit of sin; but my failure was complete. I do not advise any other person to try self-healing. It brought me to despair; it drove me almost to the loss of reason. The more I scrubbed and cleansed the blacker I became. I washed my Hottentot self, and he was more of a Hottentot after I had bathed him than he was before. I only saw how black the black mass was when I had whitened him for the moment with my soap. Job said, 'If I wash myself with snow water and make myself never so clean, yet shalt Thou p'unge me in the ditch and my own clothes shall abhor me;' and it was so with me. Therefore speak I of my own experience; and taught by my own failure I cannot urge any man to seek cleansing by his own doings or efforts, but I urge him to accept that cleansing which God has promised in the Covenant of Grace. * * * There is your sin, and there it must be eternally, unless Jehovah Himself shall blot it out. The Lord begins to save His people when as yet they have no strength, and cannot cleanse themselves."

Again: "We all do fade as a leaf and our iniquities like the wind have take us away."—Isa. lxiv. 6. What strength has the withered leaf against the autumn wind? No more has the sinner against his sins.

Again: "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."—Rom. viii. 6-8. How then can he give up sin?"

2. *Do this or that.* So says Mr. Mills, but what says Paul:

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works. Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin." Rom. iv. 4-8.

3. *God will never stop your sinning.* Why then do we sing?—

Every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone.

And why is it written?—

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the LORD. I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more.” Jer. xxxi. 31-34.

And again:—

“Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying. Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it. And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their doings I judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land. But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus said the Lord GOD; I do not do this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you out from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses.” Ezek. xxxvi. 16-29.

Such passages make it plain, that if God does not stop our sinning, we shall never stop sinning at all. There is no hope for any sinner if God does not undertake this work. Mr. Spurgeon gives an incident to show how this grand gospel truth is fitted to meet the needs of the greatest sinner. He says:—

“The chaplain of a jail, a dear friend of mine, had under his charge a man most cunning and brutal. He was singularly

repulsive, even in comparison with other convicts. He had been renowned for his daring, and for utter absence of all feeling when committing acts of violence. I think he had been called "The King of the Garotters." The chaplain had spoken to him several times, but had not succeeded even in getting an answer. The man was sullenly set against all instruction. At last he expressed a desire for a certain book, but as it was not in the library the chaplain pointed to the Bible, which was placed in his cell, and said, "Did you ever read *that* Book?" He gave no answer, but looked at the good man as if he would kill him. The question was kindly repeated, with the assurance that he would find it well worth reading. "Sir," said the convict, "You would not ask me such a question if you knew who I was. What have I to do with a book of that sort?" He was told that his character was well known to the chaplain, and that for this very reason he recommended the Bible as a book which would suit his case. "It would do me no good," he cried, "I am past all feeling." Doubling up his fist he struck the iron door of the cell, and cried, "My breast is as hard as that iron, there is nothing in any book that will ever touch me." "Well," said the chaplain, "you want a new heart. Did you ever read the covenant of grace?" To which the man answered sullenly by enquiring what he meant by such talk. His friend replied, "Listen to these words, 'a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.'" The words struck the man with amazement, as well they might, he asked to have the passage found for him in the Bible. He read the words again and again; and when the chaplain came back to him next day, the wild beast was tamed. "Oh! Sir," he said, "I never dreamed of such a promise! I never believed it possible that God would speak in such a way as that to men. If He gives me a new heart it will be a miracle of mercy; and yet I think," he said, "He is going to work that miracle upon me, for the very hope of a new nature is beginning to touch me as I never was touched before." That man became gentle in manner, obedient to authority, and childlike in spirit. Though my friend has nothing left of the sanguine hopes he once entertained of converted criminals, he yet believes that in this case no observer could have questioned the thorough nature of the work."

4. Examine the statement: *Pay a price.* We read in Isaiah lv.: 1. "Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat: yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price."

And again, Rev. xxii. : 17. "And the Spirit and the bride say come, and he that is athirst let him come and take the water of life freely."

5. Again we are told to *surrender our will*, as if that were the easiest matter in the world. What do we read in Psalm cx. : 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." And in Phil. xii. : 13. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

The invariable teaching of the Gospel is this, Salvation, eternal life, all spiritual blessings are the gift of God. "The gift of God is eternal life," Rom. vi. : 23. "The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men," Titus ii. : 11. "The just shall live by faith," Rev. i. : 17. Faith is the first step, the second step, the last step in the Christian life. "We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed." 1 Peter i. : 3-5.

6. *There is no limit to what God will do to him who does everything for God.* It would be nearer the truth to say, there is no limit to what God will do to him who most deeply feels he can do nothing for God, for it is written, "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away," Luke i. : 53. When Naaman came as a rich man who happened to be a leper he got nothing, when he felt he was a leper who happened to be a rich man, he went to Jordan and was cured. "Who hath first given to Him?" Ro. xi. : 35.

7. Think of these *piles of letters*. My heart aches for these seeking souls, for I know something of this misery. Pardon me if I give part of my own experience, I do not like to do so, but sometimes it is justifiable. Thirty-five years ago I verily believed that that was the gospel. I strove earnestly to give up sin, to bid good-bye to sin, to surrender my will to God. What was the result? Despair. The more I tried the worse I got. I asked myself, what is the use of going on like this. I must drift like a straw on the irresistible current of sin. I must go to perdition. I remember the very spot beneath a tree near Burgess's farm house in the mid links of Montrose where this feeling overwhelmed me. Often since then have I thought that dead tree was the picture of my dead soul. What brought deliverance? When I saw that I had nothing to do, simply to believe, simply to receive Christ, the gift of God into my heart,

and with Him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Oh! what a burden was rolled away.

I look back on these thirty-five years. I see that just in the measure in which I have walked by faith in the Son of God there has been strength and peace and joy and obedience, and when I have not walked by faith, sin and only sin. Therefore I know to-day far more terribly and vividly, than then, that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. It is simply as a sinner, utterly helpless in myself, to do a single thing to please God, that I must come to the Saviour every hour of every day, by faith in Him to receive forgiveness, strength and peace, and every blessing I need. I have power over sin just as I am able to make Paul's motto my own, "The life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." Therefore my sympathies are altogether with the degraded harlot on the streets of Edinburgh, who, when she heard a man preaching a gospel like what we have been hearing from Fay Mills, was heard saying to herself. "Eh man! your line's no lang enuch for the like o' me." Thank God there is a line long enough for the chief of sinners. Not that which says, "Do this and live" but "Live and do this."

In speaking lately of some errors into which men have fallen in regard to the Christian life, some making it consist of a bundle of doctrines, others a bundle of ceremonies, others a bundle of emotions, and others a bundle of philanthropic actions, I pointed out that the last is a very seductive error, and very fashionable with some who think themselves the advanced spirits of the age. With many, "Humanity is the one article of their creed. Altruism their highest duty." A superficial view of some of John's statements in his first epistle, where he insists on the necessity of love in deed and truth, might lead such to think that he supports their position, and that to be benevolent and kind is everything. The love of which John speaks is to them nothing more than natural benevolence. This plausible and pleasant error harmonizes entirely with the spirit of "this tolerant age," which is never wearied of repeating, with increasing confidence, that a man's creed is of little consequence, the all-important things are his deeds; that it is not our faith but our works; not what we believe, but what we do, which will commend us to God. Thus it is nothing more than the modern phase of the old contention between justification by faith and justification by works.

Now, it is in reference to these things that John gives the great commandment which puts everything in its right place. After saying, "Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not we have boldness before God, and whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight." He adds: "And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as He gave us commandment." 1 John iii. 21-23. Hence this popular talk is all wrong. They speak contrary to the Scriptures who say that all that is required is to do what is right, and that it does not much matter what we believe. Not so says the apostle. In order to do what is right, it is necessary to believe. Faith is the first step in true obedience to God's commandments.

Notice well, that John does not say that the commandments are Faith and Love, but the commandment. The thing God commands is Faith and Love. Therefore, two things are plainly taught. The Love of which John speaks is inseparable from Faith. The Faith that is not accompanied by Love is no Faith. The Love that is not accompanied by Faith is no Love. You can no more separate Faith and Love and have each a living thing acceptable to God, than you can cut a living body in two and have each part alive. He that does not love in deed and in truth has not Faith. He that does not believe has not Love. We may do many things good and beneficial in themselves, the fruit of natural kindness of heart, and these may be very pleasing in the sight of man—all men will praise us for them; but we cannot do that which is pleasing in the sight of God, except we keep His commandments. This truth is self-evident. In our dealings with God it will never do for us to make our own terms with God—to compound with Him, as it were, and make our attention to one duty an excuse for not attending to another. If we would please Him we must do what He commands; and what does He command? What is the commandment which He puts before and above all others, which He considers of primary importance, essential to the establishing of a right relation between Him and us? "THIS IS HIS COMMANDMENT THAT WE SHOULD BELIEVE IN THE NAME OF HIS SON JESUS CHRIST."

Why should God lay such stress on this commandment? Why is it so fundamental?

BECAUSE GOD IS HOLY.

He desires our holiness, and He knows that only in the keeping of this commandment are we sinners enabled to keep all the

other commandments, Perfect obedience, perfect love, the doing of the things that are pleasing in God's sight, are all wrapped up in faith. The only door of entrance into perfect obedience to all God's commandments is the door of faith. He knows that if we truly believe in His Son Jesus Christ, we will love one another, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight; therefore, this is His great commandment. And to this correspond the words of the Saviour. When they asked Him, "What must we do to work the works of God?" how did He answer? Build a hospital, endow a charity, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the outcast? Nay, but "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." Except we do this, nothing else that we do can be pleasing to God; but we can do nothing that will please Him more than this. This is what His heart is set upon, what he desires first of all from us, that the Son of His love should be the object of our faith. What a word is this for the sinner! You feel that you are in no condition to keep God's commandments so as to please Him. But you are just in the condition to do this which will please Him greatly: "Believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ." He will be pleased with your keeping of no other commandment, but He will be pleased with your keeping of this. You may be in no circumstances to do anything else that will be pleasing in His sight, but you are in the very circumstances to do that which will please Him best. Sinner, think of it. God asks of you if you will do Him this pleasure, to believe in the name of His Son. This is His commandment here and now to keep. Here is the thing pleasing in His sight, here and now to do. Without faith it is impossible to please Him, but faith does please Him, it pleases Him well; therefore, believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ.

Special stress is also laid on this commandment,

BECAUSE GOD IS LOVING.

It is His desire to bless us, to do us good. He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. It is His desire to make us partakers of the divine nature, to lift us out of darkness into light, out of death into life; to make us, who are by nature the children of wrath, in very deed the children of God. All those blessings depend on faith in Jesus Christ. "As many as received Him to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name."

Now, filled with a sense of our great unworthiness, we sinners might say: such an honour is too great for me; it would be

presumption for me to lay hold of it. But when I see that God commands me to believe, lays upon me all the weight of divine authority to shut me up to faith, and therefore makes my unbelief my greatest disobedience and rebellion, all such feelings are swept away. Surely there can be no presumption in obeying the command of God. He will never find fault with me for doing what He has laid upon me as my first great duty toward Him. All the presumption would be in not believing. It is not using a great liberty to believe: it is simply keeping the commandment of God. The liberty is all the other way. You use a great liberty when you refuse to believe. Be not disobedient. Displease not God by unbelief; rather please Him by believing. Oh, how loving is God! He would shut up you and me, and all men, to salvation in Christ by commanding us thus. If any man is not saved, it is not because he has broken all the ten commandments, but because he has broken this New Testament commandment. Accordingly, does any, the vilest sinner out of hell, ask, What must I do to be saved? I have no difficulty in answering in the words of the old hymn:—

Nothing, either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no.
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago.

When He from His lofty throne
Stooped to do and die,
Everything was fully done.
Listen to His cry—

“It is finished.” Yes, indeed,
Finished, every jot.
Sinner, this is all you need;
Tell me, is it not?

Till to Jesus’ work you cling
By a simple faith,
Doing is a deadly thing—
Doing ends in death.

Cast your deadly doing down,
Down at Jesus’ feet;
Stand in Him, in Him alone,
Gloriously complet’.

But there is

ANOTHER FUNDAMENTAL ERROR

which seems to be found in Mr. Mills’ teaching, and which is really the basis of that which we have been considering. He holds unscriptural views as to the state of man by nature. He says, “Mothers, always remember there is an angel in your child.

It is your business to bring the angel out. You can do it." If this is true, why did Jesus say to Nicodemus, that most respectable and upright ruler of the Jews, "Ye must be born again," yea, told him that except he was born again he could neither see nor enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Or, what shall we make of Saul of Tarsus? Was there an angel in him, brought out by his father and mother. Perhaps they thought so, for he attained to victory over all known sin, and to the fulfilment of all known duty. "As touching the righteousness which is of the law," he was "blameless." Phil. iii. 4-6. He cries to every one who thinks he has anything to boast of in the strength of the flesh, "I more." Was the angel in him brought out? No. He was actually "the chief of sinners." 1 Tim. i. 15. He who cries "I more" when he compares himself with self-made saints, cries "I chief" when he compares himself with ruined sinners.

Some time ago this same kind of teaching was indulged in in this city at a gathering at which I was present. The leader of the meeting was asking questions of the audience in regard to the condition of man by nature, and as one of them I answered by quoting passages of Scripture, *e. g.*, Ps. li. : 5, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me"; Eph. ii. 3, "And were by nature the children of wrath even as others." The leader was ill pleased with my answers and sought to pay me out at the evening meeting, when he delivered an address, and as one of the audience my tongue was tied. In this he caricatured my views by representing a mother holding her baby in her arms and calling it a "little devil." I have listened to few things in my life more shocking. Scripture teaches very plainly that a child is neither an angel nor a devil, but a human being possessing a sinful nature with momentous possibilities before it. For every infant, just because it is a member of the human race, there is provided so great salvation, that it can be raised far above angels and become a child of God clothed in the very glory of the only begotten Son of God, and sitting with Him on His throne. But there is another dark alternative; he may neglect that great salvation: and then, if we are to believe the words of the Lord Jesus, he must spend eternity in the place prepared for the devil and his angels. Hence the solemn question, pressed with such vehemence by the Holy Ghost, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation." Every child that comes into the world has a birthright far more wonderful than that of Esau. He may become a child of God, for it is written, "As many as received Him, to them gave

He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name." John i. 15. But, alas! how many like Esau despise that birthright, selling it for a mess of pottage; for the whole world and all it contains is but a mess of pottage compared with this birthright.

But this free gift is all of God's grace, not because there is anything in the nature of man to commend him to God or to merit such a wonderful blessing. What saith the Scripture as to the state of man by nature? "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." John iii. 6. And what is the character of the flesh? Paul, through the Holy Ghost, gives the answer. "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." Ro. vii. 18. Again: "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be; and they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Ro. viii. 6-8. Again: "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph. ii. 1. The sinner is like Lazarus as he lay in the tomb, and his coming forth to life depends altogether on the power and love of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life. Jesus raised the dead three times: the little maid whose spirit had just fled, as she lay upon her bed; the young man who was being carried out to his burial; Lazarus, who had been dead three days,—which was the easiest? All equally impossible to man—all equally possible to God. So the youngest sinner needs the same Almighty power to quicken him into newness of life as the oldest reprobate, and the oldest reprobate is not beyond the power of "God who quickens the dead and calls the things that are not as though they were." Ro. iv. 17. Isaiah also gives us God's own photograph of the natural heart in those words: "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Isa. lxiv. 6.

Still further, Mr. Mills tells us that "In every person there is the germ of faith which, if cultivated, would bring forth the highest spiritual life." These words were delivered with the greatest emphasis and deliberation as one of the strong planks in the speaker's theological platform. He is a Presbyterian, and one might be inclined to put this question from the Shorter Catechism to him: "How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?" "The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ by *working faith in us*, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling;" but

to the law and the testimony. I do not know how big this germ of faith is, but I know that Jesus says: "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed ye would say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea, and it would obey you." Luke xvii. 6. Again, in 1 Cor. xii. 8-9, we read: "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit." If faith is a gift of the Spirit, how can it be the possession of every man? Also, in Gal. v. 22, we read: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Also Eph. ii. 8: "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." The whole thing, and all its parts, faith included, is the gift of God. Also, Paul tells us distinctly in 2 Thess. iii. 2: "All men have not faith." Which are we to believe?—the Apostle Paul or Mr. Mills? Again, in 1 Tim. i. 14, we read: "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." Also, 2 Peter i. 1. Peter writes to the Jews of the Dispersion as "to them that had obtained like precious faith with us." How could they obtain that which was theirs by nature?

As regards this whole question, how any man who accepts the teaching of Scripture can read the opening chapters of Romans and not acknowledge the utter sinfulness of man by nature, I cannot understand. Yet I know that this fundamental doctrine is denied by many, and its rejection is the source of innumerable errors. When a student, I saw that this was a most important question, and therefore gave special attention to it. I knew that my views on this subject would of necessity influence all my other teachings; therefore I searched the Scripture concerning it, and the more I searched the more I became convinced that lax and unscriptural views were prevailing. Accordingly, the first sermon I ever wrote, and the first I ever preached, was on this subject. Why? Because I had no desire to sail under false colours. I wished to let every one who heard me know exactly where I stood as to this doctrine. I could never consent to be minister to a people who did not accept heartily that teaching. I have been minister of three congregations. In each of them I preached that sermon, so that there could be no doubt as to my views. Do you remember that sermon? I preached it in old Coté Street Church sixteen years ago, and I stand by the truth there enunciated more firmly than ever. Do you? Perhaps you have forgot the sermon—perhaps you have never heard it;

therefore I will preach it again next Lord's day evening. I know that since I wrote that sermon over twenty-five years ago, the doctrine it contains has become more and more unpopular. That does not move me in the least. That does not prove that the doctrine is false ; it only proves that the Church is drifting—drifting from the truth—in too many of its members. Modern theology makes a great deal of man. The first question in the Shorter Catechism used to be, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." Now some would make it, "God's chief end is to glorify man and enjoy him for ever." I keep by the old, whoever may preach the new, but these teachings are influencing members of this congregation. Hence it is my duty, as one set over you in word and doctrine, to point out these errors.

The last point I dwell on is this. Fay Mills does not clearly proclaim

THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST.

There is an uncertainty, haziness and hesitation in regard to this which is very unsatisfactory. As a very intelligent and earnest Christian said to me : "He seems often to be coming up to the point, but always evades it." Now, every true evangelist keeps the Cross of Christ in the forefront. As we sang, "Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war, with the Cross of Jesus going on before," so does he preach. What does Paul say in Gal. iii. 1 : "O, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified." What does he cry to them ? "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Gal. vi. 14. This is the great power whereby souls are drawn to the Saviour, in fulfilment of His own words : "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John xii. 32. But if this is the power, it is also the offence, and there has always been a tendency to escape the offence of the Cross. A man could preach, not three times a day for three months, but three times a day for three years, and give no offence, if he leaves out the Cross, but alas for his gospel.

Consider some of this evangelist's strange sentences : "Christ is no more the Saviour of the world in the measure of His influence than the Christian is in the measure of his influence. God means to save the world through a people that are acquainted with Him." I read : "We have beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." 1 John iv. 14. Again : "In none other is there salva-

tion ; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." Acts iv. 12.

Again we are told by Mr. Mills : " Those whom God selected He selected to suffer, to bear the sins of the world." John the Baptist, on the contrary, says when he sees Jesus : " Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away (margin " beareth ") the sin of the world."

Again we are told : " Christ did not say come and be saved, but come and be saviours, to be one with Him. We are all called to be redeemers and should ask ourselves what have we done ? " Have we not read in Isaiah, " Look unto me and be ye saved all ends of the earth." Isa. xlv. 22. Though all who believe in Christ are one with Him as members of His body, He alone is the head, and not one of the members on earth is as yet a partaker of His full salvation. We are only being saved ; we are " waiting for a salvation ready to be revealed." " Our salvation is nearer than when we believed." We have received the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls, but we " wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Ro. viii. 23.

Again he says : " We can save souls ; we can save souls more surely than we can raise wheat. We can save men, and we cannot fail to save them, if we use right methods. We cannot guarantee a harvest after all our efforts, but there can be no failure in our saving souls, if we go right about it." What a pity Noah did not know this secret. He preached for a hundred and twenty years, but alas for the souls saved. Did not the Saviour have to cry, " Who hath believed our report ? " John xii. 37, 38. Does not Paul say : " I planted, Appollos watered, but God gave the increase. So, then, neither is he who planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7

Again : " For this (the establishment of His kingdom on earth) there has been the eternal heartache of the Father God." This is a fine sounding phrase, but I would like to know where that thought is found in Scripture. We read of the eternal purpose of God—the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will, but where of the eternal heartache ? We read in 1 John iv. 9 : " God is love. In this was the love of God manifested in us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be

the propitiation for our sins." God is love. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. And we are taught in Scripture that these three work together for our redemption through the Cross of Christ. It is written, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." Ro. viii. 30. This is God the Father. It is written, "Who loved me and gave Himself for me." Gal. ii. 20. This is God the Son. It is written, "If the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sanctify to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your consciences from dead works to serve the living God." Heb. ix. 13, 14. This is God the Holy Ghost. Yea here Father, Son and Holy Ghost all united in the work of redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ. Hence the grand axiom of redemption, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Heb. ix. 22. Therefore, any gospel that does not make the blood prominent is no gospel.

Now, I have here two letters, one from the leading Secularist of the Dominion of Canada, Captain Adams, the other from an earnest evangelist thousands of miles from Montreal, written to a friend here, who gave me permission to quote it. What does the Secularist say?

"I was gratified by the evidence of evolution in revival methods shown by your dignified bearing and serious manner, and by your giving more prominence to righteousness of life than to the old sacrificial theology. You made love to God more prominent than the blood of Christ, and kept hell fire out of sight."

What does the evangelist say? "My mind is greatly drawn to Montreal just now, on account of the meetings which Mr. Mills is holding, and I hope and trust that all of God's dear children are getting a blessing in consequence of those services, and that sinners are being converted. From the "Witness" it would seem that a wonderful interest is being manifested in the city, although I have been disappointed in reading the reports of his sermons. I think I told you that Montreal is my spiritual birth-place, and I am intensely interested in any effort which makes for the salvation of souls there, and I sincerely hope and pray that God is using Mr. Mills to advance His cause and to glorify His dear Son Jesus Christ. I would certainly like to see more in the newspaper reports of the *Gospel plan of salvation—salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the*

*substitutionary work of the Lord Jesus on the Cross at Calvary.** Satan hates the blood and hates the doctrines of Christ crucified, and in these last days he is doing all he can to keep the Cross in the background. I am, although thousands of miles away, praying much for Montreal, and my prayer is that thousands may be saved, and saints stirred up and revived."

So you see the Secularist is pleased and the Evangelist is dissatisfied, because of the same thing. Are both in error? If Fay Mills had given the blood due prominence, could these two men have so written? Read for yourselves and see how little he makes of the blood of Jesus. In January, when teaching the lesson on Cain and Abel to the Sunday School Teachers' Union Class, I said: "If a preacher makes little of the blood of Christ, have nothing to do with him." What I said in January I say in March. I have said it for the last 25 years, and if I lived to be as old as Methuselah I would rather that my tongue should rot than I should say anything different. What do we ourselves think of the blood? Apart from that blood there is no hope for any of us. Apart from that blood there is no Gospel to preach. But with the blood there is hope for the vilest. You can face and conquer all your sins with this, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." My late brother once told me an incident that happened to Richard Weaver. He had been preaching in Dublin. At his last meeting a notorious sinner was convicted of sin. He was in great agony of soul; he had no hope that God could ever save him. The worn-out evangelist felt powerless to help him, and said, "I must say good-night, for I have to leave for Holyhead to-morrow; but before I go I would like you to learn two lines. They are not in the Bible, but they are the truth of God:

"His blood can make the vilest clean;
His blood avails for me."

The man learned them, and they parted. Next day, as the steamer was leaving, a man rushed through the crowd on the wharf and shouted "Richard Weaver!" Richard Weaver held up his hand, and then with the tears streaming down his eyes this great sinner shouted in the hearing of all:

"His blood can make the vilest clean;
His blood avails for me."

There I stand shoulder to shoulder with that believing sinner; yea, with every saved sinner on earth, no matter what

* The italics are the evangelist's.

they may have been—the vilest of the vile, publicans and harlots and idolaters and adulterers, and effeminate, and abusers of themselves with mankind, and thieves, and contentious, and drunkards and revilers, and extortioners and blasphemers, who have been washed and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. I stand shoulder to shoulder with these redeemed sinners on earth, trusting only in the blood of Jesus, because I hope to stand shoulder to shoulder with every redeemed sinner in Heaven, glorying in the same blood. Look up! look up! Who are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence come they? These are they that come out of the great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Hark! What do they sing? They sing a new song, saying, “Worthy art Thou . . . for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tribe and people and nation.” Seeing these things, knowing these things, hoping for these things, I am not surprised at the vehemence with which Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, cries: “Though we or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that we preached unto you, let him be anathema.”

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